# Listening to War: Uncovering Wisconsin's Wartime Oral Histories
Application Narrative

## Significance

**Overview**

*Listening to War: Uncovering Wisconsin's Wartime Oral Histories* will identify oral history collections documenting Wisconsin citizens' experiences of 20th century war and its consequences and establish a comprehensive plan to digitize, preserve and provide access to hidden, at-risk personal accounts of life during wartime. In conjunction with the National Endowment for the Humanities' *Standing Together* initiative, the Recollection Wisconsin collaborative statewide digital program will locate and assess collections of sound recordings and moving images held by small, rural and resource-poor libraries, historical societies and other cultural heritage institutions across Wisconsin. By bringing to light oral history collections capturing the everyday lives of Wisconsin residents during World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Persian Gulf War, this Foundations project will contribute a multitude of new individual voices to our understanding of the American experience of war in the 20th century.

Improving access to firsthand accounts from a wide range of individuals – servicemen and women, their spouses and children, antiwar activists, refugees and others – will facilitate a deeper understanding of the impact of war on American life and the ways in which global economic, political, and social issues are enacted on the local level. In Wisconsin, the lived experience of military conflict encompasses not only the stories of the tens of thousands of men and women who served on the battlefronts in Europe and Asia, but women who donned overalls and welding masks to work for Great Lakes shipbuilders and other manufacturing industries during World War II, Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Wisconsin, student activists on campuses across the state who organized sit-ins and demonstrations to protest the Vietnam War, Hmong refugees who sought asylum in the Upper Midwest following the United States' withdrawal from Southeast Asia, and members of Wisconsin's eleven federally-recognized American Indian tribes who have served in all branches of the United States military.

Oral history interviews are especially potent and emotionally resonant primary documents. Audio, film and video recordings of individuals telling their own stories in their own words are unfiltered, immediate and irreplaceable. As veterans and other eyewitnesses to war continue to age, these recordings become some of the only firsthand evidence that remains available to researchers. At the same time, these materials are at extreme risk for degradation and obsolescence. As described in the most recent National Agenda for Digital Stewardship, "the analog media created over the last 50-60 years is deteriorating at a rapid rate. Video tape and sound recording formats are becoming obsolete – the equipment needed to play back the formats are disappearing, and the physical tape itself is deteriorating . . . Digitizing analog materials is now considered the best preservation strategy and the best method for new distribution and access."[1]

This project will identify oral history collections known to be at highest risk for loss – those held by public libraries, archives, historical societies, museums and schools in small, rural, isolated Wisconsin communities – in order to ensure that this important content does not permanently vanish from the historical record. There are 270 public libraries in Wisconsin that serve communities of fewer than 6,000 people; more than half of them support only one or two paid staff, and many are located more than three hours from a city with a population over 50,000. Of the 390 local historical societies and historic preservation organizations in the state, more than three-quarters are staffed entirely by unpaid volunteers. Restricted financial resources and limited availability of professional staff mean that media collections in

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[1] 2015 National Agenda for Digital Stewardship, National Digital Stewardship Alliance
http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/ndsa/documents/2015NationalAgenda.pdf

these institutions receive minimal cataloging and care, while locally available tools and expertise necessary for reformatting, preserving, and providing access to this content are nonexistent. Moreover, due to restricted hours of operation (most local historical societies, as well as many local history archives housed in public libraries, are open to the public only seasonally and/or one or two days each week), these materials are accessible to only the most dedicated and flexible of researchers.

In many cases, local memory institutions are not only the repositories of oral histories; they are actively creating this content by reaching out to veterans and other community members in order to record their stories, often in collaboration with local schools. The work of the Mount Horeb Public Library to interview local veterans of World War II and Korea, gather related photographs and other materials, and make them available online in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center is a stellar example of this type of community engagement. Many local efforts are much more amateur productions, yet they still capture important historical knowledge and first-hand experiences. Because they are created by institutions without the resources for ongoing preservation of digital assets, and are usually not produced to preservation-level standards, these born-digital recordings are also at great risk for loss.

**Wisconsin and 20th Century Military Conflict**

Wisconsin citizens have served in each of the nation's 20th century military engagements, while Wisconsin's home front has been the stage for numerous events of national significance. World War I was a period of unusual tension in Wisconsin, as the nations in Europe with which the state's residents identified squared off against one another. The politically dominant Progressive and Socialist parties generally opposed America's entry into the war in Europe. Nine of Wisconsin's eleven Congressmen, as well as Wisconsin's most famous politician, Senator Robert La Follette, courted international controversy by voting against the declaration of war.

As the largest immigrant group in Wisconsin, German Americans were deeply affected by World War I. Notwithstanding the wide spectrum of political and religious beliefs across Wisconsin's German American community, the vast majority maintained a strong cultural unity based on pride in German accomplishments, a vigorous German language press, and a persistent conflict with the dominant Yankee cultural values. During 1917 and 1918, German culture became suspect throughout the United States, and German Americans were persecuted, especially in areas of heavy German settlement including Indiana, Ohio, Missouri and Wisconsin. Some Wisconsin towns refused to teach German in their schools and German-language books were burned in Wisconsin streets.[2]

Despite many sources of outspoken opposition, the majority of Wisconsin citizens supported the war. Wisconsin was the first state to report in the four national draft registrations, and was highly commended by federal authorities for its efficiency. The Wisconsin National Guardsmen in the Red Arrow Division gained a reputation for their fearless and effective fighting. Over 118,000 citizens went into military service, and 1,800 Wisconsin citizens died in the war. On the home front, Wisconsin was the first state to organize a State Council of Defense as well as a County Council of Defense, which helped to educate citizens on the war and the sacrifices that were demanded of them, such as meatless and wheat-less days. These food conservation programs became the models for national food rationing efforts in World War II.

In contrast to the social conflicts of World War I, the Second World War ushered in a period of great prosperity and unity in Wisconsin. The recent challenges of the Great Depression receded as increased defense spending resulted in major contracts for Wisconsin businesses. Great Lakes shipbuilders in Manitowoc, Sturgeon Bay, Kewaunee and Superior turned out submarines and ships for the United States

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[2] Lorin Lee Cary, "The Wisconsin Loyalty Legion," 1917-1918," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 53:1 (Autumn 1969): 33-50.

military. New lightweight aircraft used in the war relied on Wisconsin plywood processed by the Roddis Lumber and Veneer Company in Marshfield and innovative plywood and glue technologies developed by the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory in Madison.[3] The Badger Ordnance Works in rural Sauk County quickly grew into one of the largest manufacturers of ammunition in the world. Farmers supplied large quantities of food to the military and civilian populations. To produce all of these goods, many Wisconsin women replaced the men who had joined the armed forces.

Unlike World War I, antiwar sentiment virtually ended with the entry of the United States into the war. Although Senator Robert La Follette, Jr., and Governor Phil La Follette opposed American involvement in the war, upholding the legacy of their father, both conceded in the end that the threat of fascism in the face of Nazi triumphs justified U.S. participation.

Roughly 320,000 Wisconsin soldiers served in the armed forces during World War II, including 9,000 women. Wisconsin's National Guard formed a substantial part of the new Red Arrow Division, helping to maintain the respected reputation of its predecessor from World War I by remaining undefeated in the Pacific theater. Richard Bong, a native of Poplar, Wisconsin, gained national fame as America's top flying ace, shooting down forty Japanese aircraft from his P-38 Lightning. Antigo native John Bradley took part in the historic flag raising on Iwo Jima. More than 8,000 soldiers died and another 13,000 were wounded in combat. More than 1,000 Holocaust survivors immigrated to Wisconsin following the war, most settling in Milwaukee.[4]

Although the Korean War is often overlooked as the "Forgotten War," more Wisconsinites served during this conflict than in World War I. Five Wisconsin men were awarded the Medal of Honor for their service in Korea, including Mitchell Red Cloud, a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation. Roughly 132,000 men and women from Wisconsin served during the Korean War, and more than 700 died. As Americans battled Communist forces in Korea, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin fueled Cold War paranoia on the home front, launching a public campaign aimed at eliminating the supposed Communist infiltration of government and foreign policy. Though only in power for a brief period, McCarthy symbolized the frenetic anti-Communism that gripped American foreign policy in the 1950s.[5]

The war in Vietnam was a defining experience for millions of Americans in the 1960s and 1970s, changing the ways that many viewed themselves, the government and the world. More than 57,000 Wisconsin residents served in Southeast Asia; 1,239 did not return. Following the war, Hmong refugees, many of whom had fought alongside U.S. forces, settled in central and western Wisconsin. The state is now home to the third-largest Hmong population in the country, after California and Minnesota, providing a visible infusion of cultural diversity in small and mid-sized communities in what was previously a largely Anglo-European region.[6]

During the Vietnam War, the University of Wisconsin-Madison gained a reputation as one of the nation's most radical campuses, but students at college campuses across the state organized marches to protest the war, burned draft cards and confronted military recruiters. In October of 1967, UW-Madison students protested against Dow Chemical Company, makers of the weapon napalm, which was recruiting at the Madison campus. The resulting police action and violent confrontation helped to radicalize many

[3] Sara Witter Connor, "Wisconsin's Flying Trees: The Plywood Industry's Contribution to World War II," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 92:3 (Spring 2009): 16-27.
[4] Michael E. Stevens and Ellen Goldlust-Gingrich, eds., *Voices of the Wisconsin Past: Remembering the Holocaust* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1997).
[5] Michael O'Brien, *McCarthy and McCarthyism in Wisconsin* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1980).
[6] Jo Ann Koltyk, *New Pioneers in the Heartland: Hmong Life in Wisconsin* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998).

formerly apolitical students.[7] Another significant antiwar event took place on August 24, 1970, at UW-Madison's Sterling Hall, home to the Army Mathematics Research Center, a U.S. Army-funded facility that many protesters believed contributed to the death and destruction in Vietnam. A group known as the New Year's Gang detonated a homemade bomb outside Sterling Hall, killing physics researcher Robert Fassnacht and injuring four others. The Sterling Hall bombing was a watershed event for the national antiwar movement, as the shock of Fassnacht's death brought a sudden halt to the violence to which protesters and police had resorted.[8]

The Persian Gulf War, which included Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, was the United States' first major armed conflict since the Vietnam War. The Wisconsin National Guard saw its first major mobilization in thirty years. An estimated 10,400 men and women from Wisconsin served during the Persian Gulf War. While the majority of Americans supported the war, UW-Madison's tradition of antiwar activism was temporarily reignited.[9] Approximately one in four veterans of the Persian Gulf War have experienced "Gulf War Illness," a range of health problems due to exposure to numerous chemicals during their deployments. In 2005, Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to officially designate a Gulf War Illness Recognition Day, acknowledging the aftereffects of wartime service on returning veterans and their families.

**Collections and Their Use**

While the Wisconsin Veterans Museum functions as the primary repository of Wisconsin's military history, evidence of the Wisconsin experience during wartime is distributed among myriad local and statewide organizations. In preparation for this grant project, a preliminary set of materials held by libraries, schools, museums and historical societies in small communities across the state has been identified. The following collections will function as test bed items for project development:

- Chippewa Valley Museum, Eau Claire: interviews with Hmong refugees who settled in northwest Wisconsin (audio cassette)
- D. C. Everest Area Schools, Wausau: interviews conducted by high school students with local veterans of WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf  (various formats)
- Frances L. Simek Memorial Library, Medford: interviews with local veterans, created as an Eagle Scout project (born-digital)
- Paterson Memorial Library and Wild Rose High School, Wild Rose: interviews with local veterans of WWII (born-digital)
- Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center, Superior: interviews with veterans of WWII, Vietnam and Korea from across Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest, as well as women who worked on the WWII home front (video cassette)
- Richland County History Room, Richland Center: interviews with local veterans (born-digital)
- Wisconsin National Guard Museum, Camp Douglas: interviews with National Guard members from across Wisconsin (various formats)

Content identified for digitization during the course of this project will complement a number of existing digital collections of photographs, letters and other primary sources documenting the impact of war on small Wisconsin communities, all available through the recollectionwisconsin.org portal. These digital

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[7] David Maraniss, *They Marched Into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003).

[8] Tom Bates, Rads: *The 1970 Bombing of the Army Mathematics Research Center of the University of Wisconsin and Its Aftermath* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

[9] Mark Van Ells, "No Blood for Oil: Protesting the Persian Gulf War in Madison, Wisconsin," *Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict* (1998-1999).

collections include the *Brown County War History Committee Collection* from the Neville Public Museum of Brown County, which features photographs and letters from Green Bay-area residents who served in WWI; *The Home Front: Manitowoc County in World War II*, a collaboration of the Lester Public Library, Manitowoc County Historical Society, Manitowoc Public Library, and the Wisconsin Maritime Museum; *Kewaunee Ships of War*, featuring images of ships built by the Kewaunee Shipping and Engineering Company for military use in WWII, from the Kewaunee Public Library; and *Menominee Veterans Photographs*, a collection of portraits of enrolled members of the Menominee Nation who served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, compiled by the College of Menominee Nation and Menominee Public Library.

Two core audiences for the materials that the *Listening to War* project will uncover are veterans and their families and K-12 teachers and students, both within Wisconsin and beyond. According to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 300,000 wartime veterans are now living in the state. The popularity of events targeted at veterans, such as "LZ Lambeau," which brought together more than 70,000 Vietnam veterans and their families at Green Bay's famed Lambeau Field in 2010, indicates that Wisconsin's veterans are highly interested in opportunities to share their own stories and to engage with the stories of fellow service-people. Traffic to existing digital collections documenting Wisconsin's military history, such as the Wisconsin Historical Society's [Wisconsin in the Civil War](#) collection (100,000 annual views) and [World War I Military Portraits](#) from the Milwaukee Public Library (25,000 annual views) indicate substantial public interest in online access to stories of Wisconsin in wartime. The upcoming centennial of the United States' entry into World War I, in 2017, is likely to spark even more interest in the topic of WWI and in Wisconsin's military history more broadly.

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Disciplinary Literacy in Social Studies require the integration of primary sources into the K-12 curriculum. Digitizing oral histories will expand the pool of primary source materials available to K-12 teachers and their students. Providing access to content from all corners of the state will allow Wisconsin students to connect with voices from their own communities, offering them direct and engaging encounters with historical evidence.

## History, scope and duration

The proposed Foundations project grew out of a need to evaluate existing approaches to digitization on the statewide level as Recollection Wisconsin prepares to become a Service Hub for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). The theme of 20th century wartime experiences was selected in order to encompass collections known to be held by many memory institutions around the state and to embrace a topic of broad public interest and national historical significance. A collaborative statewide project organized around this shared topic will inspire Wisconsin residents' awareness of and engagement with the Recollection Wisconsin program and DPLA as the Service Hub develops. The Foundations grant will enable Recollection Wisconsin to establish a plan in order to provide an effective on-ramp for small communities to bring their unique stories to a national stage through DPLA.

Since 2004, Recollection Wisconsin (formerly Wisconsin Heritage Online) has partnered with libraries, archives, historical societies and museums across the state to help them digitize and share unique local content online by providing standards, guidelines, training and content hosting. Metadata describing over 220,000 digitized resources from more than 200 partner institutions is aggregated into a central search portal at [recollectionwisconsin.org](#). This wealth of primary sources is highlighted in online exhibits investigating slices of state and local history, from civil rights activism to bicycling to fast food restaurants; on social media, including a Tumblr blog with more than 100,000 followers; and in lesson plans developed for K-12 teachers. In 2013, Recollection Wisconsin received a Leadership in History Award from the American Association for State and Local History.

The *Listening to War* project will leverage Recollection Wisconsin's existing technical and administrative infrastructure, which has been managed by Wisconsin Library Services (WiLS) since the program's inception. Additional partners in this collaborative initiative are the Milwaukee Public Library, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the Wisconsin Historical Society. Each of these six Governing Partners has a lengthy history of collaboration, outreach and leadership in Wisconsin's cultural heritage community. Each Partner has committed in-kind contributions of metadata aggregation, technology support, content hosting and other services on an ongoing, long-term basis in order to sustain the core operations of the program.

## Methodology and standards

An Advisory Committee made up of experts in military history, oral history, public humanities, digital preservation and digital access will guide the project throughout the grant period. Dr. Stephen Kercher, Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and Dr. Mark D. Van Ells, Professor of History, Queensborough Community College, City University of New York, are scholars of 20th century military history and the impacts of war on American culture. Erika Janik, independent historian and executive producer of "Wisconsin Life," a popular essay series from Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television, and Susan McLeod, who, for thirty years, served as the director of the Chippewa Valley Museum, a regional history museum in Eau Claire, bring extensive experience in community outreach and the development of humanities programming for general audiences. Expertise in the creation and dissemination of oral histories comes from Troy Reeves, Head of the Oral History Program for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives and Ellen Brooks, Oral Historian for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum. Paul Hedges, Emerging Technologies Archivist for the Wisconsin Historical Society and Dorothea Salo, Faculty Associate in the School of Library and Information Studies at UW-Madison, provide technical knowledge of audiovisual preservation, reformatting and access.

Emily Pfotenhauer, Program Manager for Recollection Wisconsin, brings a decade of experience managing digital projects and collaborating with small cultural heritage institutions across the state, and will function as the Project Director. A Digital Archives Assistant will be hired to administer an initial survey to identify collections, conduct follow-up assessments with cultural heritage institutions, and promote the project to the cultural heritage community and the general public. Consultants from AVPreserve will provide guidance on technical requirements and methods for reformatting audiovisual content, support in identifying digital preservation partners in Wisconsin, and guidance on systems, tools, workflows, and metadata associated with successful digital preservation.

The Advisory Committee and project staff will convene virtual meetings, by phone or video conferencing, regularly throughout the grant period. Major strategic decisions will be presented to the Recollection Wisconsin Governing Board for approval.

Essential models and methodologies for this project's approach to audiovisual preservation and access on a statewide scale include the work of the California Audiovisual Preservation Project (CAVPP) and the Kentucky Oral History Commission.

**Products and Outcomes**
1) *An inventory of oral history collections documenting Wisconsin citizens' experiences of World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War, held by Wisconsin libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, schools and other cultural heritage institutions.* The grant period will begin with the distribution of a simple web-based survey targeted at cultural heritage institutions across the state in order to identify relevant collections of sound recordings and moving images, including legacy media content as well as born-digital materials. This broad initial overview will be followed by phone interviews or site visits to gather more detail about the intellectual content, formats, condition and accessibility of identified collections. Detailed collection-level information regarding degradation and

obsolescence risk factors as well as the research and instructional value of intellectual content will be recorded using mediaSCORE and mediaRIVERS, open source tools developed by Indiana University in collaboration with AVPreserve. Based on this inventory, a directory of identified collections will be compiled and made publicly accessible for use by researchers and educators.

2) *A prioritized list of collections and identified technical requirements and methodologies for future digitization.* Using the information documented in mediaSCORE and mediaRIVERS, collections will be evaluated and prioritized for future digitization based on risk of loss as well as historical significance. Resources for reformatting analog materials will then be identified through discussions with third-party vendors as well as conversations with academic libraries, larger museums, regional public library systems and other regional institutions that may have capacity to provide digitization services for small organizations. In order to leverage available resources and minimize costs as much as possible, the final plan for reformatting may be a hybrid of multiple solutions, including enhancing capacity at regional centers, modeled on the Sustainable Heritage Network's "workbench" approach, and incorporating hands-on experience for graduate students through the use of the Recovering Audio and Digital Data (RADD) digital conversion toolkit at the UW-Madison School of Library and Information Studies.

Technical specifications for reformatting analog content will be based on CLIR's "Capturing Analog Sound for Digital Preservation", the "Sound Directions: Best Practices for Audio Preservation" report from Indiana University, and the Digital Preservation Coalition's "Preserving Moving Pictures and Sound."

3) *Strategies for digital preservation, access and interpretation.* Key institutional partners, including the Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee, will be convened, with the goal of identifying one or more long-term stewards of the digital content that would be created and collected in the implementation phase of the project. Preservation and access systems and workflows currently in use by these institutions will be assessed and plans for integrating this content will be established, or, if needed, alternative systems and workflows for handling the new content will be identified.

A data model will be developed based on DPLA's Metadata Application Profile and the Recollection Wisconsin Metadata Guidelines. Descriptive metadata will be made available for OAI harvesting by Recollection Wisconsin and will be incorporated into the data aggregation provided to DPLA. Tools for indexing time-based media, such as the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) developed by the University of Kentucky, will be explored.

A preliminary outline of an interpretive framework for the digital collection will be developed, considering shared themes that emerge across collections and across communities. Tools to further contextualize the content, such as maps and timelines, will be identified. Use of the DPLA and Europeana APIs to draw out threads connecting local and regional stories with national and international narratives will also be investigated.

4) *Compiled best practices for small cultural heritage institutions related to the creation and dissemination of oral histories.* Preliminary conversations with cultural heritage organizations across the state have revealed that many of these institutions are actively creating new oral history interviews with veterans and other community members. Due to limited resources and limited expertise, this born-digital content is typically not produced to professional standards, accompanied by useful metadata, or created with an eye towards future preservation and access. Moreover, the copyright status of these recordings is often ambiguous, as standard release forms are frequently absent. A wealth of valuable documentation is already available from numerous sources including the Oral History in the Digital Age initiative, the American Folklife Center's Veterans History Project, and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's own oral history program. However, many small institutions are unaware of these resources or uncertain how to

implement them locally. In order to encourage the adoption of consistent standards, a set of best practices for the digital creation and dissemination of oral histories will be compiled and shared with small cultural heritage institutions.

5) *Increased public awareness of audiovisual resources in Wisconsin collections.* Through the process of developing a network of partners and experts, Recollection Wisconsin will raise the public profile of at-risk audiovisual materials currently hidden in collections across the state. Assembling a community of interest around the rescue and reuse of these materials will build a foundation that will enable the project to expand its reach and impact in future phases.

## Sustainability of project outcomes and digital content

This Foundations project will result in an identified set of at-risk audiovisual collections in analog and digital formats documenting Wisconsin citizens' experiences of war in the 20th century and a comprehensive plan for preserving and providing access to these materials. At the close of the grant period, Recollection Wisconsin will be well positioned to pursue additional funding to carry out this plan. Potential funding sources for implementation may include grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, and various private foundations at the regional, state and national levels. If further funding is secured, immediate next steps for implementing the project plan will include identifying a team of staff or interns to work with local cultural heritage institutions in order to coordinate the transfer of analog materials to identified providers for reformatting; performing necessary conversion activities; and loading content into identified digital repository and access systems along with appropriate metadata.

Moving forward, the road map for digitization, access and preservation established by the Foundations grant and the network of partnerships that will be developed during the grant period can be effectively repurposed to create digital collections of sound recordings and moving images encompassing subject areas in addition to military history. Moreover, the project's approach to assessment and collaboration on the statewide level can be applied to digitization initiatives for other types of historical materials, such as photographs and manuscripts, held by small cultural heritage institutions with limited resourced.

Recollection Wisconsin's Governing Partners have all made ongoing commitments of technology support, content hosting, project management and other services in order to ensure the sustainability of Recollection Wisconsin and any projects undertaken by the program. The Wisconsin Historical Society, UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee all have digital preservation strategies and repository systems currently in place as part of their own digitization programs. These Partners will lead the conversation to determine suitable arrangements for the long-term preservation of and access to digital content created in future phases of this project.

## Dissemination

In order to raise awareness of the *Listening to War* project during the planning process, a selection of oral history interviews will be highlighted as audio features on ["Wisconsin Life"](#) as well as posts on the [Vintage Wisconsin](#) blog hosted by Wisconsin Public Radio. "Wisconsin Life" reaches an average audience of 18,000 in each radio broadcast as well as tens of thousands more online.

Throughout the grant period, updates will be shared through WiLS and Recollection Wisconsin's communication outlets, including social media, blog posts, newsletters and weekly email messages to more than 500 member institutions across the state. Recollection Wisconsin will also promote the development of the project to regional, state and national organizations that honor veterans and support social studies and history education, including the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, the Wisconsin Veterans Foundation, the American Legion, the Wisconsin Council for the Social Studies, and the National Council for History Education. Advisory Committee members will be encouraged to share

information about the project on their own institutions' social media platforms, websites and other channels. A press release and other communication documents will be created in order to ensure consistent messaging. These promotional efforts will not only spread the word and generate enthusiasm for the project, but will also identify potential partners and develop relationships for future growth.

The directory of identified collections resulting from the inventory and assessment process will be made publicly accessible for use by researchers and educators through the websites of Recollection Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and the Wisconsin Historical Society. The best practices compiled for small cultural heritage institutions will be added to Recollection Wisconsin's existing standards and guidelines for participating organizations. Following the completion of all planning activities, the Project Director will draft a comprehensive white paper detail the project's findings including selection criteria, copyright considerations, technical specifications for reformatting, a metadata schema, and tools for discovery and preservation. Advisory Committee members will also share the results of the planning process and anticipated next steps through sessions proposed for the annual conferences of WiLS, the Wisconsin Library Association, Wisconsin Council for Local History and the Wisconsin Federation of Museums, as well as at least one webinar for staff and volunteers unable to travel to those events.

## Work plan

**Phase I – Identification and Assessment – Months 1-6**

- Develop and distribute a simple web-based survey targeted at Wisconsin libraries, archives, historical societies, museums and schools in order to identify a preliminary list of sound and moving image collections (Project Director, Advisory Committee)
- Develop criteria for assessing collections using mediaSCORE and mediaRIVERS (Project Director, Advisory Committee)
- Conduct phone interviews or site visits to assess and evaluate collections identified in initial survey (Digital Archives Assistant)
- Record collection-level information about condition and research value of identified collections in mediaSCORE and mediaRIVERS (Digital Archives Assistant)

**Phase II – Strategic Planning – Months 7-9**

- Continue follow-up interviews and visits to assess collections, as needed (Digital Archives Assistant)
- Develop list of prioritized content for digitization and access (Project Director, Advisory Committee)
- Determine technical requirements and methodologies for reformatting analog content (Project Director, Advisory Committee, AVPreserve consultants)
- Identify one or more institutional partners to serve as repository and steward for digital assets (Project Director, Advisory Committee, AVPreserve consultants)
- Identify systems, tools and workflows for preservation and access, including data model and interpretive framework (Project Director, Advisory Committee, AVPreserve consultants)
- Identify and compile best practices for the creation and dissemination of oral histories (Digital Archives Assistant, Advisory Committee, AVPreserve consultants)

**Phase III – Documentation and Dissemination – Months 10-12**

- Develop communication plan and press release (Project Director, Digital Archives Assistant)
- Distribute best practices to cultural heritage institutions (Digital Archives Assistant)
- Create publicly accessible directory of identified collections, based on Phase I inventory, and distribute for use by researchers and educators (Digital Archives Assistant, Advisory Committee)

- Produce white paper (Project Director, Advisory Committee)

## Staff

Project Director **Emily Pfotenhauer**, Recollection Wisconsin Program Manager at WiLS, will coordinate the work of the Advisory Committee and consultants, supervise the Digital Archives Assistant, produce the white paper and ensure that all project objectives are met. (0.15 FTE)

A **Digital Archives Assistant**, housed at WiLS, will be hired to carry out key project activities, including conducting phone interviews and site visits to assess collections and disseminating project deliverables to the cultural heritage community and the general public. (0.75 FTE)

**AVPreserve**, a leading preservation and information management consulting firm, will offer support in identifying digital preservation partners; guidance on systems, tools, workflows, and metadata associated with digital preservation; and research on best practices for copyright and privacy issues in the oral history field. Led by Senior Consultant **Bertram Lyons**, AVPreserve will serve as a supporting contributor in concert with the Advisory Committee and project staff. (32 hours consulting services)

All members of the **Advisory Committee** will work together to develop the initial survey, create a list of prioritized content for digitization and access, and disseminate project deliverables to relevant audiences. Each Committee member will also contribute support to the project in his or her specific areas of expertise. **Dr. Stephen Kercher**, Professor of History, UW-Oshkosh, and **Dr. Mark D. Van Ells**, Professor of History, Queensborough Community College, City University of New York, will establish the assessment criteria for research value of intellectual content of collections and develop the interpretive framework for the forthcoming digital collection. **Susan McLeod**, retired director of the Chippewa Valley Museum, will conduct outreach to local historical societies and museums. **Erika Janik**, independent historian and executive producer for Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television, will lead public promotion efforts. **Troy Reeves**, Head of the Oral History Program at UW-Madison and **Ellen Brooks**, Oral Historian for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, will compile best practices for small cultural heritage institutions to use in establishing oral history programs. Ms. Brooks will also conduct outreach efforts to the Wisconsin veterans community. **Dorothea Salo**, Faculty Associate, School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS), UW-Madison and **Paul Hedges**, Emerging Technologies Archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society, will establish the assessment criteria for degredation and obsolescence risk factors of collections, determine workflows for reformatting analog content, and identify systems for digital preservation and access. Ms. Salo will also assist with outreach to the Wisconsin library community and coordinate related work by graduate students.

A **Governing Board** oversees the policies, budget and administration of the Recollection Wisconsin collaborative initiative and will review all project outcomes. Members of the Governing Board are Matthew Blessing, State Archivist and Administrator of the Division of Library-Archives, Wisconsin Historical Society; Ryan Claringbole, Public Library Technology Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; Ann Hanlon, Head, Digital Collections and Initiatives, UW-Milwaukee (2015-2016 Board Chair); Lee Konrad, Associate University Librarian for Technology Strategies and Data Services and Director of Digital Library Services, UW-Madison; Catherine Markwiese, Metadata Librarian, Milwaukee Public Library; and Stefanie Morrill, Executive Director, WiLS.